

INFORMATION PAPER

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY

One out of ten American families is directly affected by developmental disability. Developmental Disability formerly, and sometimes currently but improperly, called "mental retardation" cuts across the lines of racial, ethnic, educational, social and economic backgrounds. It can occur in any family.

An individual is considered to have a developmental disability based upon three criteria:

- Intellectual function deficits are present,
- The condition is present from childhood, and
- There is significant limitations exist in two or more adaptive skill areas.

Adaptive skill areas are those daily living skills needed to live, work and play in the community. They include communication, self-care, home living, social skills, leisure, health and safety, self-direction, functional academics (reading, writing, basic math), community use and work.

A person with limits in intellectual functioning, who *does not* have limits in adaptive skill areas, may not be diagnosed as having a developmental disability.

A person with or without limits in intellectual functioning, who has limits in adaptive skill areas--such as may result from head injuries, strokes, some diseases and substance abuse--is not considered to have a developmental disability.